Dear Jim, Butterfield Digression: Counterattack: Press 2/2/74

Completing the reading of the last two batches of very helpful clips from you last night and this morning brings a number of things from the past to mind, I suppose most of all the failure of the press while it is beating its breast hardest and of the press most of all the NYTimes and the Post.

Your note on the Krogh story is a case in point. I think that after I saw/heard him I noted that he had actually said something quite different from what Mike Wallace said he had said, and this, in turn, is also different from what his friends said he could say. He has made himself part of the counterattack (and been assigned the pie-card confinement) yet in a way that enables him to say, "But that is not what I said." He has not actually disputed or disproved what Dean said, and it exactly coincides with the WH campaign documented in the last of the stories, the one I have just read, from the Newsday service (Chron 1/26).

Dean was explicit in not saying that Krogh told him he got the instructions from Nixon personally. "Straight from the Oval Office" means by normal channels, and that is Ehrlichman, which is what Dean quoted Krogh as saying and Krogh and Ehrlichman in different ways confirm or do not dispute.

A quarter of this Newsday piece, a very good piece and something all the papers, most of all those involved, should have done, is devoted to Mollenhoff. Well, I saw Clark the afternoon of his Press Club debate with Colson, now almost a year ago and long before the story on Nixon's personal dishonesty with money and property came out. I offered him the leads I had on this and he said he wanted them. I sant him my Dean correspondence and he did nothigg, as perhaps 10 others also did nothing so long before by accident the story broke in a way that permitted denial.

(Except for Clark, all those mentioned did take leaks on the Moorer-Kissinger bugging and spying, please note. So they are not all that holy-they did take White House leaks and did not attribute.)

This reminds hoe clearly STM(W) saw the potential of the Butterfiled operation. And how early. Since then I have seen no disproof and much to accredit it. The most obvious some might not find as persuasive as I do, the fact that since then none of this has been directed to what Nixon knew and did and all attention has been on the peripheral.

Consistent with this has been an unimaginable covering up that involves every sector, most of all the Congress and the press. If you read enough of my ellipsis you have an idea. Some of the other breakins were impeachable offenses in themselves and they have been hidden. I have the proof they were what they were and that it was known, not just put together as I did in writing dating to perhaps June, maybe May. Not fewer than two Senate committees knew. And there was more Nixon and CIA involvement, known and hidden. His knowledge that it is known and is hidden is what makes his counterattacks possible. And necessary.

Another and recent case is the peripheral, in the overall, the erasing of the tapes. Nobody has put that together. A month ago I tried to get the Post to do it and told Sussman how, by beginning with the Haldeman notes that are in court evidence and available, as they also have been quoted. I asked Barry to let me had a xerox and he said he'd see if they had it and would send. I phoned him yesterday, not having told him this was in court evidence, and told him it was. His reply was that in checking for it he had found it was in evidence but that he could not find a Post copy. He had not obtained a replacement. (The Post has quoted it.) I asked if he now would and he said he would.

Everybody went off on the wrong trail on that one. Everybody assumed the importance os those tapes is disclosure of what Nixon knew. The actual importance is that they would disclose Nixon's and WH efforts to learn not what they already knew but what the FBI had learned. I did not spell it out to Barry but told him this was it and that I regard it as more important. The actuality is that 6/20 is the morning after Haldeman got a summary of what the FBI had by then learned. I have it and the covering letter from Gray.

I don't think that as of now any paper has done the simple and obvious, put together all of 6/20's tapes that no longer exist. That was the wholesale destruction date. From what is published enough can be done.

I should include more in this reminder but haven't time because of other things I must do today and a couple of meetings, one with Mathias, who is starting his re-election campaig here today. I note the belief we are now at what can be a pivotal point and it is GL's way